

**Remarks of The Secretary of State
Colin L. Powell
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(Distributed print version)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Colleagues: I join the other speakers in thanking Foreign Minister de Hoop Scheffer and his government for so graciously hosting us all and for completing a successful term as Chairman-in-Office. The United States looks forward to close cooperation with next year's Chairman-in-Office, Bulgaria. And I am delighted that we have been joined here in Maastricht by the acting President of Georgia.

Almost three decades have passed since North American and European leaders met in Helsinki, Finland to sign the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Ever since, the Helsinki process and the organization that grew from it have been rallying cries for freedom and instruments of peaceful, democratic change.

The Helsinki Final Act of 1975 enshrines a concept of security that remains essential to a Europe whole and free. The Final Act tells us that lasting security requires not just respect for the sovereignty of states, but also respect for the integrity of human beings. And History tells us that those who show contempt for human life pose the greatest threats to stability.

Today, by addressing threats such as terrorism, intolerance and trafficking in human beings, the member states remain faithful to OSCE's founding principles. By taking concrete measures against these threats, OSCE can be an example of the kind of effective multilateralism which President Bush and Prime Minister Blair have called for.

My government welcomes the adoption today of the "Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century" and the "Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension." The strategies are guides for how OSCE can apply its practical experience to real world problems. OSCE will be judged by actions, not words, results, not intentions.

Taking practical steps to protect our people from terrorism while at the same time respecting their fundamental rights should be a high priority for OSCE. Terrorism is not just an assault on our states and citizens, but on civilization itself. Terrorists respect no boundaries, neither national nor moral.

We must build on OSCE's first Annual Security Review Conference. Key areas for attention should be MANPADS, excess arms stockpiles and travel document security. I

am pleased that we will agree today to the goal of machine-readable passports by the end of 2004. We will need to do more to strengthen border security and improve police training. The car bombings in Turkey are only the latest attacks to occur in an OSCE member country. A great many – too many -- of us have lost citizens to terrorism.

Time and again we have seen how intolerance can threaten security within societies and among nation states. Battling anti-Semitism and racism are two separate areas where the OSCE needs to continue the work it began under the leadership of the Dutch Chair-in-Office. This year's unprecedented conference on anti-Semitism lays a foundation on which the OSCE can build to combat this scourge that has afflicted the OSCE region for centuries. The recent anti-Semitic attacks in Istanbul and France, as well as in the United States, show that there still is much to do.

My government welcomes Germany's offer to host a follow-up conference on anti-Semitism and Belgium's offer to host a follow-up conference on racism next year. We also commend OSCE efforts to collect information on hate crimes. Taken together, these efforts will contribute to peace and stability in our diverse region.

Trafficking in human beings constitutes a direct violation of the integrity of the person. Victims of trafficking, the majority of them women and children, are deprived of the most fundamental human rights, subject to threats and violence, and made to toil under horrific conditions in sweatshops and on construction sites, in fields and in brothels. As President Bush stated in his speech at the United Nations earlier this fall: "There is a special evil in the abuse and exploitation of the most innocent and vulnerable."

The OSCE has a commendable action plan against trafficking in persons and this Ministerial will create a new mechanism against trafficking. All member states should work to disrupt trafficking networks and punish the traffickers as well as to aid, educate and rehabilitate their victims.

Even as we take on the challenges of terrorism, intolerance and trafficking in persons, OSCE must continue its vitally important efforts in many other areas affecting the security of Europe. The promise of Helsinki has yet to be fully realized.

In some regions, long-standing disputes have yet to be resolved.

In the days prior to our meeting, many parties intensified their efforts to encourage a political settlement to the Transnistria problem. Negotiations should continue within the mediation structure coordinated among the OSCE, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine to best help the parties search for a settlement that will be viable, stable and promote the security and well-being of Moldova and the region as a whole.

Whatever the current status of various mediation efforts, it is the people of Moldova who must ultimately choose the constitutional and other arrangements best suited for their country. The OSCE must stay fully engaged to ensure that the process of making that choice is democratic and transparent to the citizens of Moldova. OSCE also must play a

vital role in creating a genuinely international stabilization force, which is essential to a lasting settlement. The internationally mandated force should be multilateral in character and limited in scope and duration.

I had hoped today to welcome Russia's fulfillment of its 1999 Istanbul commitments to completely withdraw its forces from Moldova. It appears that Russia will not meet the already extended December 31 deadline. This is a setback, though some progress has been made. I also urge Russia and Georgia to resolve the remaining issues relating to the Russian military presence in Georgia. I must call once again for the earliest possible fulfillment of the Istanbul commitments on Moldova and Georgia. And I must express my regret that it has not been possible to reach consensus on Ministerial statements addressing these important issues.

The United States stands by the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty. Russia's fulfillment of the Istanbul commitments is a prerequisite for us to move forward on ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty, which all of us want to see enter into force.

Long-running conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia unfortunately seem no closer to resolution this year than last. We must find the political will to turn confrontation into cooperation to benefit the entire Caucasus region.

This year, in a number of OSCE states in the Caucasus and elsewhere, key elections were seriously flawed. And today, in some member countries, human rights and democratic freedoms are under siege.

Belarus is conducting a systematic campaign against the independent media and non-governmental organizations. Turkmenistan's persecution of political opponents and religious minorities violates the letter and the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act.

Credible reports of abuses by government as well as rebel forces in Chechnya remind us that Russia must ensure respect for human rights even as it combats terrorism and upholds its territorial integrity.

Last week we witnessed the "Revolution of the Roses" in Georgia. Tens of thousands of citizens protested peacefully in the streets, demanding their democratic rights and a legitimate, representative government free of corruption. My government looks forward to working with the interim Georgian government to ensure that new elections take place in accordance with the constitution. The international community should do everything possible to support Georgia's territorial integrity throughout and beyond the election process. No support should be given to breakaway elements seeking to weaken Georgia's territorial integrity.

We expect the upcoming elections to be free and fair. OSCE must take an active role in supporting and observing the elections to ensure that the Georgian people have the opportunity to choose their leaders. The United States is prepared to make a substantial

contribution, and we welcome the indications we have received that others are also willing to do the same.

The OSCE continues to make crucial, on-the-ground contributions to the building of a democratic, prosperous and secure Europe. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly are helping to put the lofty Helsinki principles we all pledged to uphold into daily practice. I want in particular to commend the work of OSCE's field missions in the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus. Every day the missions work to strengthen civil society, foster inter-ethnic cooperation, encourage economic reform, promote human rights and the rule of law, and prevent conflicts. All member states owe the OSCE field missions our strong support and cooperation.

Of course, the links between political and economic freedoms and security are not unique to Europe. Freedom, prosperity and peace are linked inextricably everywhere. Beyond the OSCE region, I hope that we will add concrete content to our long-standing formal partnerships with Asian and Mediterranean states. We welcome the new relationship we established this year with Afghanistan. The OSCE should give meaning to this partnership by finding a way to help the Afghan Government. All of us have an interest in a stable, peaceful Afghanistan on the OSCE's borders.

President Bush spoke recently of the historic challenge facing the leaders and peoples of the Middle East to reform their political and economic systems. They might look to the Helsinki experience and consider how they could draw upon it and adapt it to their own circumstances. I am traveling today to the Maghreb and hope to have discussions there on this and other issues.

Mr. Chairman, what was true when the Helsinki Final Act was signed in 1975 is just as true today. Respect for fundamental freedoms is an essential factor for peace, justice and well-being. May we now recommit ourselves to advancing those freedoms within the OSCE community, for the sake of our own citizens and as an inspiration to others.

Thank you.